



**Testimony
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Connecticut Water Works Association (CWWA)
Before the Planning & Development Committee
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SB-1111 - AN ACT CONCERNING RATE INCREASES BY WATER POLLUTION CONTROL AUTHORITIES RECEIVING STATE GRANTS FOR WATER POLLUTION CONTROL PROJECTS.

The Connecticut Water Works Association (CWWA) submits the following comments in **opposition to SB-1111**, which would require rates to be approved by a majority of the chief elected officials served by the water pollution control authorities if they receive certain state grants.

Although this bill does not directly impact the operations of public water utilities, it does set a very difficult precedent for municipal utilities by giving elected officials in the affected communities veto power over any rate increase. By creating uncertainty as to whether rate increases will be approved, the bill significantly compromises the ability of plant operators to sustain operations and make needed upgrades to comply with state and federal standards. If a plant is unable to make upgrades to meet state and federal standards – which are intended to protect the environment and water resources of the state - it would face considerable penalties and legal costs as well as disrupt efforts to protect the environment and aquatic life.

Water and wastewater utilities are already struggling to make needed investments in infrastructure and comply with a myriad of state and federal water quality laws. SB-1111 would make it very difficult to ensure compliance with such laws to provide reliable services to residents and businesses.

Under current law, chief elected officials, citizens and other interested parties have the opportunity to weigh in on proposed rates at publicly noticed hearings or comment periods. In addition, water utilities generally reach out to their communities to ensure that the need for the rate increase is understood and supported. In addition, rate charges may be appealed if a party believes they are aggrieved by the established rates.

Therefore, we urge you to oppose the bill, which will make it very difficult for municipal wastewater utilities to effectively manage operations and which sets a very difficult precedent for other utilities.

The Connecticut Water Works Association, Inc. (CWWA) is an association of private, municipal and regional public water supply utilities serving more than 500,000 customers, or population of about 2½ million people, located throughout Connecticut.